Trans-Siberian Orchestra

THE LOST CHRISTMAS EVE

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THE BEGINNING

It was the night of Christmas Eve and somewhere on the other side of eternity (which is somewhere after today but before tomorrow) a tear of incredible sadness slowly welled up within the eye of a beautiful young lady. The sorrow within the tear was so great, that though it desperately wanted to stay with her to give whatever comfort it could, the weight of the pain it contained eventually caused it to fall. It fell through eternity, across countless galaxies, star systems and universes until it found itself entering the atmosphere of our own world. There, while falling through the clouds, it was slowed for a moment as it landed on a strand of the Princess of Winter's snow-white hair. The tear ran to the end of that strand, where it lingered for a moment, before continuing its fall. The Princess, having noticed her small visitor, had blessed the teardrop transforming it into a snowflake, which allowed it to continue the remainder of its journey in a gentle descent among countless other snowflakes, until it finally landed in front of an old toy store in New York City.

Now, while the snowflake was nestling in amongst its fellow winter travelers, downtown in the business district on Wall Street, all was unusually quiet. The streets were empty of people and cars and a thick layer of still falling snow muffled everything, even the footsteps of dreams on their way to tomorrow. Everyone had gone home early to prepare for all the promised magic of the next day and the lights were out in every office window. Well, nearly every office window. Up on the fifty-eighth floor of one massive office building, a single office window was still brightly illuminated in cold fluorescent light. Within that office sat a businessman going through legal documents. He was a gentleman, in his early sixties with graying hair, but still in excellent physical condition. Calling for his secretary, the man was visibly annoyed to have received no response. Getting up, he looked out his office door only to see every desk and cubicle empty. "Christmas," he muttered disgustedly as he realized that everyone had long since gone and he would be getting no other work done this night. Putting on his coat and scarf, he grabbed his briefcase and left. Stepping out to the street, his frustration mounted as he soon came to the conclusion that his probability of finding a cab was extremely low at best. Resigning himself to the situation, he pulled his coat a little tighter and started walking home.

Meanwhile, across eternity, the Lord called before Him His youngest angel and once more requested him to return to the world of mankind and to bring Him the name of the person that best continued the work of his Son on Earth. His mission had to be completed in one night, and unlike all his previous journeys to the world of humans, this time he would only be allowed to use his wings twice, once when he descended, and once more when he would leave (not unlike the souls of humans). So, with the nightfall having already started on Earth, the angel quickly unfolded his wings and began his quest, all the while wondering how he would be able to find this individual. Humans were such an extremely varied lot, a seemingly infinite mixture of rich and poor, successes and failures, young and old, that he wondered exactly where he could land that would allow him to see as many of these individuals as possible within his allotted time. As he thought, his mind recalled how on the day his Lord's Son was born that all roads on the Earth seemed to eventually lead to Rome. Every individual or idea of note seemed to make its way to that eternal city. He wondered what was the present day equivalent of that glittering jewel from mankind's past. Then, all at once he found himself whispering the words, "New York." Within moments, he found himself hovering over that city feeling the gentle rhythm of millions of heartbeats, but still unsure of exactly where to land. Suddenly, he noticed an old Grand Hotel, with a toy store on its right, a blues bar to its left and a nineteenth century gothic style cathedral directly across the street. Also in this city that often had guards at nearly every door, this hotel had a sign that said, *"Vacancies. There is always room for one more."* Thinking to himself how that sign seemed so appropriate for this night, he landed on the roof of the cathedral across the street from the hotel. Within a few minutes he realized that people of every race, creed, and age inhabited this block and he slowly took in the scene.

THE END OF THE BEGINNING

First, he saw a young man telling stories to several small children outside the hotel. Many of these children were what we would call "street kids." Children who had a deep sense of cynicism about everything, even this holiday, but within minutes of listening, every child found all their doubts and disbeliefs disappearing, vanquished by the simple words this young man was weaving into enchanted stories about where Christmas came from, where it went and what it did during the rest of the year. As he finished each story the children would

demand another. When he related a tale of how the Wizards of Winter created snow, icicles and frost as nature's decoration for this most special of days, the still falling snow whirled around him following his every gesture as if to confirm the truth of his words.

Through the alchemy of Christmas Eve his voice not only turned children who doubted its magic once again into believers, but the angel witnessed something even far more impressive. He saw adults who were passing by, stop to listen. In their eyes the angel could see them returning to their own childhood, to a time when faith was real and not pretend, and more importantly when they left, a little of that faith was still there.

The angel thought to himself that his Lord's Son had often told stories and was also always very kind to children, but he decided that since he still had time he would continue to look further. He then visited the church where he found numerous men and women of goodwill serving Christmas Eve dinner to the less fortunate. Surely, one of them might be the one he was looking for, but something told him to continue his search. Next he entered the Grand Hotel across the street from the cathedral, marveling at its beautiful architecture. The hotel had an aura of gentle goodness about it. He could feel the shadows of all the lives that passed through these halls as well as souls of the people currently staying there. Behind the doors of the grand ballroom he could hear a symphony still rehearsing for its Christmas concert the next day and of course he went inside to listen. Music always reminded him of the voice of God, for it needed no translation and could reach and renew the soul like very few other things could. But still he was not sure, so venturing once more outside, he noticed several lonely individuals entering the blues bar next door. Following them inside he discovered a slightly overweight, elderly honky-tonk piano player who was brightening the life of everyone who heard him. People who thought their problems too heavy to carry, felt them lighten and then disappear as he combined music and stories in an intoxicating blend served in equal measure to all. The singer's words of hope and happiness slipped into the listeners' minds, carried by melodies that slipped them into their souls as well. The spells he cast seemed to benefit everyone. Well, once again nearly everyone, for sitting at the corner table was the businessman from Wall Street. The happier everyone else became as they listened to the piano player and his band, the more unhappy the businessman looked, as he cast out disparaging remarks with every sip of his drink. Eventually he left, muttering vague expletives regarding his personal misanthropic view of this holiday.

Now the angel had not noticed the businessman in the bar, or even when he had left, but as the angel was leaving to once more return to the church across the street, he noticed a trail from drops of blood in the freshly fallen snow. No one else could see this trail of blood flowing from this wound, for this was a wound of the soul, but fortunately angels' eyes can see what humans cannot. So, though the time for his mission was rapidly running out, the angel decided that he could not abandon this soul in pain and he followed the trail of blood until he reached its source. It was the businessman who had just left the bar. He was cursing the holiday and was now walking through the snow directly in front of the Grand Hotel. Gently touching the man's hand the angel caused him to pause for a moment as he read the man's heart.

It seemed that he had once been a very different individual. Born in the Midwest to a very kind and religious family, he had gone to church everyday of his youth and was brought up strongly believing that *man was made in God's image*. He had an extremely happy childhood and was the pride of his town, being the star pitcher on their baseball team and graduated first in his class from the local high school. Receiving several scholarship offers, he went to an Ivy League college where he met a beautiful fellow student who had come from a similar small town background. They fell in love and shortly after graduating, got married and moved to New York, where he had received a lucrative job offer from a major investment house.

Shortly after they had settled in, she told him the happy news that she was with child, and it was with the greatest of expectations that they arrived at the hospital on the delivery date. Life seemed as perfect as life could be. But then everything changed during the delivery, his wife had started to hemorrhage. From the rush of doctors in and out of the room the father could tell that something was dreadfully wrong. The expression of grief on the doctor's face foretold his words on how the man's wife had passed away from loss of blood. The child however, a boy, had survived. When the nurse placed his newborn son in his arms, the child laid there unusually lifeless and the father could tell that there was still more bad news to come. Demanding to immediately be told all, he was informed that during the delivery the child had been cut off from oxygen for so long that he had sustained severe brain damage. The child would never have a job, never learn to talk and at best, if they were very lucky, he might one day learn to walk. At this point the father broke as he saw the foundations of his entire life collapsing. Looking towards heaven he screamed, *"This is Your image? This! I*

see nothing of God in this!" and with that he handed his son back to the nurse asking if the child could be institutionalized. The nurse, not knowing what else to do said they would see that the infant was taken to a nearby home for the severely mentally disabled where he would receive around the clock care. The businessman then turned and left without even a backwards glance at what would be his one and only child. For the next forty years he worked, paid his bills and returned each night to his empty home. He kept no close friends and even distanced himself from his remaining family preferring to live alone within his wounds.

After the angel had taken in the man's story, he stepped back staggered by the depth of the wound to this man's soul. As his hand pulled away from the man, the man's head seemed to clear and he started once more walking home. The angel not knowing what else to do, said a prayer for the man and then followed him keeping as close as he could. As they were passing the toy store to the left of the hotel, a small girl of about five years old, well-dressed in an Imperial Russian styled winter coat, was backing away from the store's window. She was laughing in delight at a rotating toy carousel lit with hundreds of miniature lights whose horses were going up and down just like the real ones at the amusement parks. Not seeing the man, she bumped into him nearly causing him to fall on the slippery snow. To the child's instant apology he replied with a few inaudible words. Sensing that the man was upset, and believing that she was the reason for his anger, she tried to explain that she had been looking in the store window and had not seen him. When this did not seem to change his hardened demeanor, she reminded him that tomorrow was Christmas and when that did not seem to work; she asked him if he had any children. The man glared down at the child and replied with the first word she could understand, a clear and emphatic, "No!" But for the first time in years his mind thought of the son that he had abandoned all those decades before. The man looked carefully at the little girl, something about her bothered him but he could not articulate what. Was it the fact that she had awakened memories that were better forgotten? But then he heard a clock's bells beginning to chime midnight. Forcing himself back to the moment, he asked the girl in a stern voice what she was doing alone on the street in the middle of the night. She replied that she was staying at the hotel next door with her parents, on the twelfth floor in room twenty-four. The man then told her that she should best get her little self immediately back to that room and without another word, she turned and ran up the steps and back inside.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

After watching her re-enter the hotel (for despite his hardened outside appearance, he was truly concerned that the girl got back safely), the man once more tried to discover what it was about the child that bothered him so. However, he could not concentrate on that because the questions regarding his own son that she had awakened in his mind refused to go away. So, standing in front of the toy store with its carousel still turning, he took out his mobile phone and called the state institution where he had left his son over four decades earlier. Asking the operator if his son was still alive and if he was still there, he was told that his son was still alive but that they no longer kept patients in this facility. The sympathetic operator then gave him as much information as she could find in the files. She informed him that his son eventually learned to walk and though he had never learned to speak, he could understand most words. She also told him that at the present time, he was now living in a boarding house hotel, uptown in the Bronx. The man slowly closed his phone and then stepping into the street, hailed down a passing cab (the first empty one he had seen all night). As the cabby started the meter, the businessman gave him directions to the Bronx hotel. Arriving there, he went inside and asked the night clerk for his son's room number. The clerk told him that his son was not in because he had not yet returned from work. When the father replied that this was impossible, the obviously tired clerk told him that he was not here to debate the fact. His son, he continued, worked around the corner at the city hospital.

With a mixture of confusion, anticipation and nervousness, the father walked around the corner where the hospital information desk confirmed that his son did work on the seventh floor. Taking the elevator up, he was surprised to find the floor marked, "Maternity." Asking the nurse on duty for his son, she told him that she was just starting her rounds and if the father wished she would be glad to show him the way. After a short walk, she pushed open one of the double doors at the end of a long hall to reveal a large, cavernous, dimly lit and seemingly empty room. As he glanced to the left he noticed several incubators glowing in the darkness, each containing a frail, shivering newborn, each obviously in incredible pain. Seeing the look of shock appearing in the man's expression, the nurse quickly explained that this was the hospital's crack ward. This room was reserved for newborns whose mothers were addicted to this highly potent form of cocaine. These infants were always born premature, underweight and in complete withdrawal from the second they left the womb. Even more

unfortunately, they were unable to give the infants anything to ease their intense pain because they were still so fragile.

When the man then asked what his son did here, the nurse nodded towards the right far corner of the room. Because of the darkness he had not noticed the individual's presence before, but he now saw a large man, whose face looked exactly like his own, only twenty-some years younger. His son was sitting in a rocking chair, holding a trembling, crying infant that he was gently rocking back and forth while whispering soothing "shhh" like sounds to it.

Noticing the slightly confused look in the father's eyes, the nurse then went on to explain how if her work in medicine had taught her anything, it was no matter who you are, if you are rich or poor, weak or strong, we all need to be held at least twice in our lives. Once when we are born and once more when we leave. Holding these infants was his son's job and he was the best they had ever had at this hospital. He had been coming there everyday for years. Everyday he would hold these infants rocking them back and forth until they fell asleep in his arms. He would never leave until each and every child was peacefully resting. In all the time that she had been working there she had never known him to take even one day off. Which was why on this night, Christmas Eve, when nearly everyone who could have gone home for the night, had done so, his son was still there.

The father felt his entire world once again collapsing before his eyes as he stared at the son that he had abandoned for not being born in God's image. He now saw this son, consoling the inconsolable, healing the hopeless. This son so clearly reflecting the infinite compassion and mercy of God was obviously so much more in the image of God than himself, the great athlete, the intellectual, the successful businessman. The nurse could see the father was choking back a flood of emotions. She started to excuse herself so that they could be alone but the father stopped her and asked hopefully if his son could yet speak. Realizing that it had obviously been a great deal of time since this man had last seen his son, she softly whispered, "No, but he is a great listener." Before leaving, she gave the father a gentle look of encouragement to approach his son. The space between the two men which could have easily been measured in yards, now seemed to stretch into infinity. He could not conceive of a way to approach this man, his son, whose existence he had denied for all these years as unworthy of being his son. Would his son recognize him? Would he hate him for having abandoned

him? Then through a window, for the briefest of moments, he thought he saw the outline of his wife's face appear in the still falling snow. Slowly, he started to move across the room.

When he reached the rocking chair, his son looked up at him and then glanced at a picture propped up on the windowsill next to him. It was a picture of his father and his mother at the age of nineteen when they had first met. Next to it was a yellowed manila folder marked with his wife's name and in big bold letters, "PERSONAL EFFECTS OF THE DECEASED." It was obvious that these were the personal belongings of his wife and they had been given to his son. It was also apparent from the wear and tear on the folder that his son had carried it with him his entire life. The picture was also worn and cracked and one could tell that he must have held it countless times. After looking at the picture and then back at his father, the son's face broke into a huge smile, a smile of pure love and forgiveness, a smile that held no animosity or hatred for past wrongs, only joy that his father was there now. The father found himself smiling back and after a few awkward seconds, he turned, went across the room to the incubators and picked up one of the trembling infants. He then went back to his son and sat in the rocking chair right beside him and together they rocked away that entire Christmas Eve.

Watching this entire scene was the angel who now was certain that he had his answer. Unfolding his wings, he swiftly returned across eternity. Standing before his Lord he was about to speak but then he found himself hesitating, like a child in school suddenly unsure of his answer. Slowly he said the name of the businessman's son, and after a slight pause, the names of the storyteller, all the people serving dinner to the poor at the cathedral, the piano player, the musicians, the nurse and even the name of the businessman himself. The angel's voice was gaining in confidence as he said how he now realized that anyone could best reflect the love and compassion of His Son at any time they decided to follow the simple words his Lord's Son had said all those years ago, "To do unto others as you would have others do unto you." The Lord smiled and that night the angel slept deep in the heart of his Lord.

THE END

AFTER THE END or THE NEXT DAY

The next day, very early on Christmas morning, a yellow cab pulled up in front of the old Grand Hotel. The father wanted to personally thank the little girl he had met the previous night and explain to her and her parents how their simple encounter had led to him and his son being reunited. Asking the driver to please wait, the businessman got out followed by his son. Together they went inside where the father told the desk clerk that though he did not know the name of the family staying on the twelfth floor in room twenty-four, he would like to know if he could speak to the parents and especially their little girl. The clerk explained most politely that he would like to help them, but this hotel only had seven floors. The father then described the little girl and asked if anyone like that was staying there. The clerk replied that as far as he knew there had been no children of that age in the hotel for the entire week. Puzzled, the father wondered if he could have imagined the entire episode. Could it have been a hallucination caused by walking too long in the cold winter night? But then looking at his son happily standing by his side, he decided that whether the child had existed or not, really did not matter.

Returning outside to the cab, he held the door open for his son and then before entering himself, opened his briefcase and dumped its entire contents into a litter basket near the curb. Seeing the confused look on his son's face, he said, "I'm changing careers. I'm applying for a job at the place where you work. Do you think that you could give me a recommendation?" His son smiled and nodded. He then asked that even though his son's hotel room was located closer to the hospital, if his son would consider moving in with him at his Park Avenue apartment, they could split the commuting cost. Once again the son beamed back an affirmative smile and in his excitement accidentally spilled the contents of the manila folder on the cab floor. As the father rushed to carefully pick them up, the first item was the picture of his wife and himself when they were still young. When he turned it over, he saw a poem on the back that he had written to her all those years ago. So long ago that he had completely forgotten about it. The poem read:

If a single tear fell from your eyes into the ocean
And then washed up on some far and distant shore
I would still recognize that teardrop
For in the end that tear would still be yours

And then he saw another picture. An even older picture in black and white of a little girl standing outside a white sideboard building with her family and she was dressed in an Imperial Russian styled coat. The businessman recognized the girl at once; it was the child that he had encountered in front of the toy store the night before and it was also a picture of his wife with her family when she was only five years old. Carefully, he placed the manila folder with all its treasured pictures and possessions into his now empty briefcase and together with his son drove home to the best Christmas day they had ever known.

THE LOST CHRISTMAS EVE

Another year has come and past
Like moments through an hourglass
And at the end of this year's trail
An offering, a final tale

Of love, long lost
And then refound
And the child by which
Those dreams were bound

Of a dusty hotel
That was long past old
And the shadows and the memories
Its hallways still hold

For things that are old
Have the best tales to tell
And usually,
They tell them well

And so it's here, my dear children
That our story truly starts
When the Lord sent once more to the earth
An angel, with a childlike heart

And on this night His mission was
To find somewhere on this earth
That human that best reflected His Son
And carried on His work

And since this mission from his Lord
Had to be completed on this one night
The angel quickly unfolded his wings
And towards the earth took flight

And this night, in case you have not guessed
Was once more Christmas Eve
When snow and light and angels' flights
All together weave

But of the angel's instructions
There was one thing more
That would make this journey to the earth
Harder than all the ones before

For the Lord had also told the angel
That he could only use his wings twice this
Christmas Eve
Once when he descended to the earth
And once more when he would leave
(Not unlike ourselves some think,
Or at least so I believe)

Now this put quite a complication
In what the angel planned
For now he had to choose most carefully
Exactly where he would land

He needed to find a single place
That would represent all mankind
But humans were such a varied lot
Such a place would surely be hard to find

A single place where there would be
Humans of every race and creed
The rich and poor, the thrilled and bored
The failures with those who succeed

But after a few moments
Carefully placed in thought
The answer appeared in the angel's mind

The city called New York

And as he neared that city
Where all those souls did dwell
He felt himself being drawn towards
An old, rundown hotel

For in a city that usually had
Guards at nearly every single door
This one just had a sign that said "Vacancies,
There is always room for one more"

Now why the angel decided to stop there
He could not quite say the reason
But he thought the sign upon that hotel
Somehow fit the sentiment of this season

Now even after all these years
The building was still a work of art
And though some façade had crumbled here and there
Most still had their parts

The walls were made of granite
Not aluminum or steel
And every pillar and ballistrade
Still had its artist's feel

Every gutter had a gargoyle
Every gargoyle had its wings
For angels can appreciate
Other flying things

So he landed on a cathedral roof
Across the street from that hotel
And looked down upon the world below
Where all those souls did dwell

And sitting on that rooftop
With his friend the winter wind
He gazed carefully at that scene below
As he slowly took it in

THE LOST CHRISTMAS EVE

On a street in the night
In the cold winter's light
A child stands alone and she's waiting

And the light that's out there
It just hangs in the air
As if it was just hesitating

And the snow it comes down
And it muffles the sound
Of dreams on their way to tomorrow

And when they appear
This night will hold them near
For where they will lead
She will follow

For here in this city of lights
This evening awakens
The dreams that it might
The winter it conjures
The spells it will weave
The snow gently covers the ground
Christmas Eve

In this scene
On this night

There's an ancient hotel
Where shadows they do tend to wander

And the ghosts that live here
Hold each moment so dear
For time's not a thing one should squander

And they recount their sand
As it runs through their hand
And examine each moment for meaning

It can be wished upon
Till the moment it's gone
Like day disappears into evening

For here in this city of lights
This evening awakens
The dreams that it might
The winter it conjures
The moment is seized
The snow gently covers the ground
Christmas Eve

Merry Christmas
Merry Christmas
Merry Christmas
Merry Christmas

Christmas
Christmas
Christmas
Christmas

Through this night
The dream still wanders
As it was meant to be

And every year this night grows fonder

Of children and circumstance
Caught in this childhood dance
As the world turns around
Keeping dreams on the ground

Windows of frosted ice
Prisming candlelight
And somehow we
Start to believe

In the night and the dream
As it cuts through the noise
With the whisper of snow
As it starts to deploy

In the depths of a night
That's about to begin
With the feeling of snow
As it melts on your skin

And it covers the land
With a dream so intense
That it returns us all
To a child's innocence

And then what you'd thought lost
And could never retrieve
Is suddenly there to be found
On Christmas Eve
On Christmas Eve
On Christmas...

And so it was in front of this hotel
Our angel did finally arrive

And standing at one corner was a young man
Who caught the angel's eye

He had a small group of children
Gathered round him there
Who all were quietly listening
Which for children is quite rare

He was telling them Christmas tales
And each one brought more children near
Where they nestled round him on those steps
So each word they could clearly hear

He then told them a Christmas story
About how all men are brothers
And when that story had ended
The children clamored for another

"Where does Christmas go
When its day is through?
Where does Christmas go," they asked,
"And what does Christmas do?"

Now children have such simple requests
Their wishes are so small
That the young man saw no reason why
He could not grant them all

CHRISTMAS DREAMS

Somewhere beyond where the light rarely goes
Somewhere beyond where the dark barely breathes
Somewhere this night where the dark only knows

She awaits ever patient
She awaits rarely seen
But her moments are taken
For in the dead of the night
Gathering light
Christmas dreams

I want to wrap all my moments around her
I want to watch as she glitters the night
Floats her dreams in the air
People watch, children stare
At these tears of captured light

While she awaits ever patient
She awaits rarely seen
Still her moments are taken
For in the dead of the night
Gathering light
Christmas dreams

And a tear falls upon her snow-white hair
And it runs to the end where it lingers there
Then it falls through the air of a winter's sky
Till it captures a dream and it's crystalized

Let it go!
Let it go!
This old world that I know

For soon everything will be changing
In a single glance
Where it all enchants
And every hope is worth saving

And a tear falls upon her snow-white hair
And it runs to the end where it lingers there
Then it falls through the air of a winter's sky

Till it captures a dream and it's crystalized

Let it go!
Let it go!
This old world that I know

For soon everything will be changing
In a single glance
Where it all enchants
And every hope
Every hope
Every hope is worth saving

They liked his stories so much
They begged him not to let it end
So he told them about the Wizards of Winter
Whose winter ball they must attend

How these wizards decorated their whole world
With icicles, frost and snow
And how with the dreams of this night beneath it
It all would magically start to glow

And the snow seemed to obey the young man's every gesture
In the cold December's air
And as for the Wizards' Imperial Ball
Well, they were already there

WIZARDS IN WINTER
(Instrumental)

Now every moment the angel spent listening
His time on earth diminished
But the angel found himself waiting there
Until each story was finished

He had only several hours left
For the quest he had been assigned
But angels like small children
Have trouble keeping track of time

But in the end it seemed this delay
Had turned out for the best
For now there were grownups all around
Listening with the rest

For as they listened to his stories
Each one till the very end
Those adults remembered their own childhoods
And a time when faith was not pretend

REMEMBER

Remember
Remember
Remember long ago

On a night with a gentle falling snow

Falling snow
Falling snow

Can I offer you
What Christmas dares
To know?

Christmas is how
In every nation
That hope is passed
Through generations

From old to young

And sometimes I'm told
It's actually passed
From young to old

Yes, our angel had been quite impressed
With this youth that he had found
But then across the street he heard
An old familiar sound

It was a multitude of voices
From the old cathedral's choir
Singing out about this night
And the hopes that it inspires

ANNO DOMINE

On this night of hope and salvation
One child lies embraced in a dream
Where each man regardless of station
On this night can now be redeemed

Where every man regardless of his nation
Ancestral relations
On this night the past can fly away

And that dream we've dreamed most
That every child is held close
On this night that dream won't be betrayed

All as one
Raise your voices!
Raise your voices!
All as one
On this Christmas Day!

All rejoice
Raise your voices!
Raise your voices!
All rejoice
Anno Domine!

On this night when no child's forgotten
No dream sleeps where he cannot see
No man here is misbegotten
And this night's dreams are still yet to be

Where every man regardless of his nation
Ancestral relations
On this night the past can fly away

And that dream we've dreamed most
That every child is held close
On this night that dream won't be betrayed

All as one
Raise your voices!
Raise your voices!
All as one
On this Christmas Day!

All rejoice
Raise your voices!
Raise your voices!
All rejoice
Anno Domine!

After the song was over
Nearly every person there
Went to the cathedral's basement
And started setting up tables and chairs

For that night this church would feed

Any person in life who had less
And both those that gave and those that received
Left that night feeling blessed

Then the angel remembered something
That his Lord's Son had once said
On how one truly followed Him
When words and acts were wed

Some people claim to follow Him
But themselves they just deceive
For his Lord's Son had said,
"You will know who truly follows Me
Not by what they say, but by their deeds"

And this church was clearly filled
With kind people of goodwill
But the angel had more time left on this night
And continued to search on still

So the angel left the parishioners
With their Christmas meal in happy bliss
And returned once more to the hotel
To make sure that there was no one there he had missed

And passing by a village square
He heard a brass quartet
Whose Christmas concerto in the key of G
He felt lighten his every step

CHRISTMAS CONCERTO
(Instrumental)

And so back at the hotel
Our angel again arrived
But this time he went up the front steps
Which, of course, led him inside
(It's one of those things that architects conveniently decide)

Now hotels are quite like people
No two exactly the same
And this one had such a magical past
The angel found himself quite entertained

The foyer still had an elegance
That the years could not disguise
And the shadows of Christmas Eves long disappeared
This night, still gently glided by

For in this hotel, here side by side
The past and the present dwelled
And the ghosts who lived here not only lived
They honestly, lived well

The lobby had a Steinway piano
That was steeped in memories
And some said Duke Ellington's fingers
Still lingered on those keys

There was a grand palace ballroom
Where princesses had once waltzed
Whose beauty and sense of style
The newspapers would constantly exhault

The ghosts of Rockefellers and Vanderbilts
Still met at their Christmas Eve charity balls
Raising money not for themselves
But raising it for all
(And the sound of their children laughing

still echoed in these halls)

Now these spirits of course, could not be seen
By any human eyes
But each one smiled at the angel
When they saw him walking by

And these ghosts reminded the angel
How every human waiting to be born,
And every life that had already left
When it was tired out and worn

Were connected by those alive right now
Which gave the living quite a trust,
To pass on what was best and good
Inside of each of us

Now within each guest room he heard many hearts
And behind each heart there was a life
And the angel carefully read them all
With the next hour of that night

When he reached the grand palace ballroom
It was behind closed mahogany doors
And when the angel was passing by it
He could hear music begin once more

It seemed that since this room was built
Musicians did permanently reside
And then the angel did what we all would do
He went to look inside

And there he found such a majestic orchestra
To please all, it would be enough
But then someone plugged a guitar in
And the volume, it crept up

So with a song inspired by Mozart's
Famous "Queen of the Night"
The orchestra added the word, "Winter"
And some notes, some fog, some lights

QUEEN OF THE WINTER NIGHT

He could have stayed there the entire night
For to him music was the voice of God
For it never needed translation
And could lift up lives that were often quite hard

But then he heard a different kind of music
From somewhere else close by
And he followed the trail of those new notes
Till he found himself outside

The notes led him to a blues bar
That was right next to the hotel
And the angel watched some lonely people enter it
And wondered if this
Was where all the lonely people did dwell

Then another guardian angel
Who happened to be near
Told him about the old blues bar
And whispered in his ear

"Here the tragically beautiful
And the beautifully tragic
Drift through this night
In a last quest for magic

Their faces are masks

That so artfully disguise
The wounds in their hearts
The scars in their eyes

Now these scars in their eyes
Never hurt, never bleed
But like cracks in a mirror
They distort all they see

For when the heart's an open wound
Its greatest threat, I fear
Is that the salt rubbed into it
Does come from one's own tears

Now there are many places on this earth
That one thinks that God has forgot
But one can often find an angel or a saint
Where one assumes angels and saints are not"

And then the other angel reminded him
Of their Lord's point of view
"You'll know them not by how they appear
You'll know them by what they do"

So when the next patron went inside
The angel followed him undetected
But what he found within that bar
Was not quite what he expected

There was an old piano player there
Playing with a honky-tonk sound
And everyone who entered that place depressed
That piano player turned their night around

And one by one he'd draw each person
Out of their self-imposed cage
And before they realized it
He had them singing on the stage

CHRISTMAS NIGHTS IN BLUE

Just another night in New York City
Snow comes down looks real pretty
Don't know how but suddenly there you are
With Jelly Roll Morton playin' for the bar

Inside here, lights are low
But each song has its own glow
As he floats them through that smokey air
You just can't believe he's really there

How old is he?
Cannot say
But claims he taught Cab Calloway
And on this night I somehow believe him
Knows every song that Christmas got
Even ones my brain has dropped
Just him and that old fir tree
All lit up this night
Electric blue

Just another night in New York City
Snow comes down looks real pretty
Can't believe but suddenly there you are
Talking with strangers sittin' cross the bar
Suddenly, all are laughin'
This night's smart, always craftin'
Building bridges nearly everywhere
Hits a wall, it just builds a stairs

Outside the colored lights they bleed
For snow is white and colors need

As it just comes down like pure salvation
It offers all its amnesty
And makes your neighbor different see
By the light of that fir tree
And this old bar
Electrified in blue

I gotta drop dead simple
Childhood view of salvation
Perhaps that's how it was always meant to be
And the more I add up all this information
It seems it all comes down in the end to you and me

So you look around till you find a phone
Then you call your mom and everyone at home
And the bar looks on and they start to cheer
When you talk to folks you haven't seen in years

And the snow comes down
And the children play
And they pray to God
It never goes away
And a childhood prayer
Should never be denied
As the night rolls on
Till it's carolized

Carolized
Carolized
Carolized
Carolized

And on this tree
The lights are done
But the colors here are down one
I guess it kind of fits the situation
Ornaments still shining bright
Watch them glitter in the light
Just this old fir tree and me
All lit up this night
Electric blue

Then a guitarist and a bass player
Read some notes off a music page
And added a little bit of jazz
A sound that never seems to age

CHRISTMAS JAZZ
(Instrumental)

Now that old piano player knew
There were other musicians in that crowd
And one by one he brought them up
And the music, it got loud

CHRISTMAS JAM

Carolize
Understand
Turn it up
Christmas Jam

The band played on and on
With no one looking at their watch
And just when you thought it couldn't get any better
They would turn it up a notch

SIBERIAN SLEIGH RIDE
(Instrumental)

GRAND HOTEL
TOYS
TOYS

Blues ♫ Bar
BAR
BAR

By this time a harder rocking stage
Would be impossible to find
And though no one was now drinking
The owner did not seem to mind

And the angel marveled how one man
Could turn around a life
And then that life turn around another's
And how it rippled through this night

But there was someone in that room
Whose heart had not been changed
A heart that had grown so hard
You'd have thought it could never be arranged

It was the businessman from downtown
Who had stopped there to rest his feet
And he clung to his drink
(Where he watched his thoughts sink)
While any strangers, he refused to greet

You could see upon his face
How happiness had been so long deferred
It was practically as if unhappiness
Had somehow become preferred

Now the angel had not seen the businessman
Though they had in that room been near
Nor did the angel see him as he left the bar
When he could no longer stand this Christmas cheer

And as the businessman exited the door
He heard someone complaining on the TV
It was the "Grinch" ranting against Christmas
And the man found that he agreed

WHAT IS CHRISTMAS?

What is Christmas?
Tinseled fairytales
Day old stockings lined up in a row

What is Christmas
Could someone tell me that?
What is Christmas?
Surely, I don't know

And everywhere these lights
Who needs to color night?
Could this whole thing be planned?
I do not understand

This Christmas
Trees with colored lights
Underneath they still are only trees
Do you think that one day perhaps they might
Find that Christmas
Is kind of a disease?

Every year it's waiting for me
Waiting for me
Every year it constantly defies
Placing strangers
There before me
There before me
Spreading hope and cheer
Mixed in with happiness
Fraternal bliss and other Christmas lies!

And there's one more thing that I have discovered
And I would now like you to know

The reason for Christmas I now realize
Is an excuse to tolerate snow
Snow!
I don't even like the sound of it
Anyway, where was I
Oh, yes!

What is Christmas?
Candles everywhere
A fire hazard any other day
Children light them
No one seems to care
All for Christmas

Every year it returns here
And every year it's waiting for me
Why can't Christmas disappear
And just pretend it never saw me
Every year I get my hopes up
That it will somehow just leave
But every year I wake to find
That once again it now is Christmas
Eve

And though his time was growing strained
He could not walk away from this soul in pain
For in the dark he had now seen
The bleeding of this wound extreme

So along the snow covered sidewalk
The angel did carefully step
Following the trail of blood drops
Combined with tears that had never been wept

And then he saw the businessman
Who had been grumbling about this night
And he wondered how that man had carried this wound
So long throughout his life

He watched the man walk past the church
Where a song seemed to reach out for him
But the man just walked right past it
And would not let it in

FOR THE SAKE OF OUR BROTHER

In a stable
In a manger
In the cold winter's air
In the arms of His mother
A Child's lying there

In a city
In a village
Though the years have gone by
The Child still remains
With the dream still close by

And each year on this night that Child reawakens
And each year on this night that hope rebegins
That the dream He has offered might one day be taken

For the sake of our brother
For the child who's forgotten
For the dream that is still lying there

O' come all ye faithful
Joyful and triumphant
O' come ye, O' come ye

To Bethlehem
Come and adore Him
Born the King of angels

O' come let us adore Him
O' come let us adore Him
O' come let us adore Him
Christ the Lord

In a stable
In a manger
In the cold winter's air
In the arms of His mother a Child's lying there

Now why this man's soul was bleeding
The angel had to understand
So invisible, he stood by him
And then gently touched his hand

Which caused the man to stand there still
Despite the winter's cold
And while he stood there in that trance
The angel read his soul

It seemed the man was not always like
The man he had become
And that angel wondered how that change had happened
And when it had begun

The man had been born to a kind and religious family
And raised in the Midwest
And all throughout his childhood
This man, clearly, had been blessed

He grew up believing, among other things
Man was made in the image of God
He went to school, observed all rules
While working very hard

He had always tried to help others
Excelled at nearly every task
And when he'd graduated high school
Of course, he was the first one in his class

And in his eighteenth summer
When it was time for him to leave
He had offers from several colleges
All of them Ivy League

And at college in all his studies
He always received straight "A"s
And when he tried his hand in theater
He got the lead in the senior play

It appeared to nearly everyone
There was no talent that he lacked
And for three years on the football team
He was, the star quarterback

And there he also met the girl
Who did become his wife
With her, his world was now complete
He had the perfect life

When they had graduated college
They were wed in a ceremony quite grand
Then they moved to New York
In a dream they seemed caught
Where all had been perfectly planned

She decorated their Park Avenue apartment
In a 1920's art-deco style
And six months after they had moved in
She told him, they would soon be having a child

And after their first ultrasound
He knew they were having a son
Their lives could not have been better
And they had only just begun

Together they arrived early at the hospital
On the delivery date
The father was taking no chances
And did not want to risk being late

But while waiting outside the delivery room
He could tell that something was going wrong
For too many doctors were rushing in
With none coming out for too long

When her own doctor finally came out
With several nurses at his side
He said that his wife had started hemorrhaging
And despite their best efforts, she died

Then in an effort to console him
A nurse gave him his newborn to hold
But from the way the child felt limp in his arms
He knew there was still more bad news to be told

The doctor then gave the prognosis
As gently as anyone could
But before he could finish explaining
The father only too well understood

The child had been cut off from oxygen
For minutes, which is far too long
The damage was now irreversible
His brain permanently malformed

He'd never hold a job,
Learn to read or ever talk
And it would be a miracle
If the child even learned how to walk

And with those words the father felt
His entire world falling apart
And he stumbled for the words to express
The tearing inside of his heart

He cried out, why did God have to take her
While she was still so young
And then as if to cut him deeper
Leave this thing here as his son

"Please explain to me God's wisdom
How could He decide
To take from me my precious wife
While leaving this alive

There is no reason for this life
Why does he even exist
And if he had never been born
There is no way he'd have ever been missed

If man is made in God's image
Then something here is surely amiss
For there is nothing of God
Nothing of God
Nothing of God
Nothing of God
Nothing of God in this"

And then he asked for the child
To be placed in a state run home
And after he had signed the papers
He walked into that night alone

And in this world he found unkind
He built a wall around his mind
And every year he'd add new parts
Until it had also enclosed his heart

He kept his job and paid his debts
As he slowly became a silhouette
Of a man walking among the tombs
While living his life within his wounds

He distanced himself from all his friends
Even his sisters and brothers
And as time it went by, he developed his eyes
So they could only see the flaws in others

With this final glimpse, the angel stepped away
And the man shook himself out of his trance
Then continued his walk back towards his home
And few would have given his soul half of a chance

And the angel himself felt helpless
As he watched that old man there
So he did what even humans do
And he quickly said a prayer

And as the prayer flew to his Lord
The angel did decide
To carefully follow the old man
And stay closely by his side

For on this night can one deny
The gift of a more sympathetic eye
To cast upon our fellow man
And on this night to understand

The frailty of childhood dreams
Like fireflies over summer streams
And if one dared to remove time's veil
Could one retrace those childhood trails?

But whispers in the winter's wind
Told of rescued dreams, forgiven sins
And who among us shall be deemed
To rescue some forgotten dream?

So on this night of Christmas Eve
As once again the spirits weave
Its snowswept dreams and colored lights
With bits of magic into each life

And as the snow comes gently down
Its soul intent to reach the ground
To cover scars the world still feels
Perhaps to give them time to heal

For as men invest in money
And professors in what they know
God invests in mercy
Like winter invests in snow

THE WISDOM OF SNOW
(Instrumental)

Now the old man was nearing a toy shop
Where he could hear a music box kind of sound
From a miniature carousel with its miniature

horses
All circling faithfully around

And a little girl wearing a Russian styled coat
Was carefully looking inside
At the horses and knights and the trains with their lights
While she was imagining they all were alive

For at this time a child will dare
To see what is perhaps not there
Or at least not there to adult eyes
Who have forgotten how to fantasize

WISH LISZT
(TOY SHOP MADNESS)
(Instrumental)

Now that young girl, outside the store
Was trying to capture snow's magic
But each flake melted at her touch
Which her young mind found quite tragic

And while chasing an elusive snowflake
That was determined to reach the ground
She bumped into the businessman passing by
And nearly knocked him down

And thinking she was in trouble
The child quickly apologized
But the man was not accepting it
She could see it in his eyes

She explained she had been looking in the toy shop
That tomorrow would be Christmas Day
But the man muttered words she could not understand
So she searched for something else she could say

"Do you have any children?" The child asked the man
"No," was his instant reply
And though he said it in his firmest voice
In his heart he knew he had lied

The girl was getting on his nerves
Which were already shot
Something about her bothered him
But he could not say quite what

Then he noticed the time was approaching midnight
What was she doing on the street?
When he asked the girl this question
The child seemed to retreat

She said she was staying with her parents
At the hotel, right next door
They were there for just this one night
In room twelve twenty-four

Then he said, "You best get back there as quick as you can fly!"
And he watched as she ran all the way
Until she was safely back inside

Then he took several steps
In the direction towards his home
But then he hesitated
And took out his mobile phone

And called up the institution
Where he had left his son
To find out if he was still there and alive
Wondering if the past could be undone

The operator who answered, searched the computer
To see if the child had survived
And she was sincerely happy to tell him
"Your son is no longer here, but he is still alive!"

Then the lady who was very kind
Said, "If you have a short while
I can give you all the information
That is here inside his file

I see that at the age of twelve
He had finally learned to walk
And could understand most things people said
But has never learned to talk

He's living uptown in the Bronx
At a boarding house hotel"
And then the lady gave him the phone number
And hotel's address as well

And for the first time in many years
The man thought about his life
And all the things he had left behind
And, of course, he thought about his wife

And he wondered if she had lived
The things they might have done
But really most of all right now
He thought about his son

BACK TO A REASON (PART II)

Time
Standing all alone
I bled for you
I wanted to
Each drop my own

Slowly they depart
But fall in vain
Like desert rain
And still they fall on and on and on

Got to get back to a reason
Got to get back to a reason I once knew
And this late in the seasons
One by one distractions fade from view

So
Drifting through the dark
The sympathy
Of night's mercy
Inside my heart
Is your life the same?
Do ghosts cry tears?
Do they feel years?
As time just goes on and on and on

Got to get back to a reason
Got to get back to a reason I once knew
And this late in the seasons
One by one distractions fade from view

I'm looking for you
I'm looking for I don't know what
I can't see there anymore

And all my time's been taken

Is this what it seems?
The lure of a dream
And I'm afraid to walk back through that door
To find that I've awakened

The night seems to care
The dreams in the air
The snow's coming down
It beckons me dare

It whispers, it hopes
It holds and confides
And offers a bridge
Across these divides

The parts of my life
I've tried to forget
It's gathered each piece
And carefully kept

Somewhere in the dark
Beyond all the cold
There is a child
That's part of my soul

Got to get back to a reason
Got to get back to a reason I once knew
And this late in the seasons
One by one distractions fade from view
The only reason I have left is
You

If he went there and saw his son
What words could he possibly say
Would his own child recognize him
And if he did, would he turn away?

Dare he rekindle this hope
Perhaps to only watch it die
And standing there in this man's place
I wonder, would you or I?

Now the angel knew if enough time passes by
Any hope can be smothered
So before it was dead, to the first prayer he had said
The angel quickly added another

CHRISTMAS BELLS, CAROUSELS & TIME
(Instrumental)

The old man stood there thinking
While staring in that old toy shop
With its carousel still turning round
In front of a music box clock

For what good's a clock without a chime
A useless thing that just keeps time
Recording moments that come and leave
But this clock's chimes struck midnight
Upon a lost Christmas Eve

And when the final chime had spoken
And the twelfth bell had finally rung
The indecision in the father was broken
He now knew what had to be done

So he got into a yellow cab
And prayed that it might lead

Through all this snow and streetlight glow
To a past he might retrieve

When the taxi dropped him off
At the boarding house hotel
It was a rundown building
With a musty, rundown smell

And he asked for his son
From the hotel's night desk clerk
Who said his son was not there
He was not back from work

When the father said that was impossible
The clerk replied, "I'm not here to debate
But he works at the hospital, just down the block
If you want you can sit here and wait
But he never returns till real late"

Then the father tried asking another question
But the clerk went back to watching his TV
Which was also playing, "How the Grinch Stole Christmas"
And the father mused, "This movie has no sympathy,
Well, at least not when it comes down to me"

Once outside he saw the hospital's entrance
And went to information by the front door
Who confirmed that his son had a job there
And worked up on the seventh floor

So he took the elevator up to that floor
Which was marked "Maternity"
And the man knew in his heart that this was a mistake
For his son working here could not be

But the nurse on duty reconfirmed that he did
And since her rounds were about to begin
If he would like to follow her
She would gladly take the father to him

So he followed her to a large dark room
That to him seemed unusually empty
Except for several incubators glowing on the right
Each with a trembling baby

These infants were all extremely frail
And obviously in incredible pain
And this sight cut deep into that father's soul
And he asked the nurse, please, to explain

"These children were born to mothers
Who were addicted to crack cocaine
And these children are born in complete withdrawal
For that drug is still deep in their veins

We can give them no other drugs to ease their withdrawals
Since they are born premature and quite frail
And any form of pain killer
Could easily cause their small hearts to fail"

"And what does my son do here?"
The father asked, "He is not a patient, I assume"
The nurse did not say a single word
But nodded to the far left corner of the room

And there the father saw his son
Who looked like himself when he was a younger man

Rocking back and forth in a rocking chair
A trembling infant held in his hands

And in his arms the child did not cry
But slept to silent lullabies
And his son rocked that newborn back and forth
Until finally, a dream was caught
But still at his rocking, his son faithfully kept
Till that poor child's trembling had also, finally, left

Then the nurse whispered softly
Into the father's ear
Something that a blind man could see
But the father needed to hear

Whispered to him in this room
Filled with mankind's misbegotten
Something that the father had known once
But somehow had forgotten

She said, "It is this way with each of us
We all need to be held, at least twice
Once upon the day that we are born
And once more when we leave this life

Your son has been coming to this place
Since as long as I've been working here
He's never missed a single day
In nearly twenty years

He always arrives promptly on time
But a time card he does not keep
For he never leaves this maternity room
Until every last child is asleep"

Then the nurse noticed the father
Trying to choke back the things he now felt
So mentioning she had to continue her rounds
She quietly excused herself

So he was now alone in the darkness
Between the past and future caught
Not knowing what to do
As his mind flooded with so many thoughts

Some beauty comes too early
While its moment never waits
And some beauty is always there
But never seen, till it's too late

Look! There is a moment
It has just slipped away
And so we lose our lives
In such ordinary ways

Where do we get our dreams from?
Where do we get our faith?
Is it something that we are born with
Or is it something for which we must wait?

The mist of things we once believed
The childhood truths for which we grieve
And in our lives could we have missed
Those that in the dark, the angels kiss

WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

What child is this
Who laid to rest
That I now find here sleeping?
Do angels keep the dreams we seek
While our hearts lie bleeding?

Could this be Christ the King
Whose every breath the angels bring?
Could this be the face of God, this child, the son I once carried?

What child is this
Who is so blessed he changes all tomorrows?
Replacing tears with reborn years
In hearts once dark and hollow

Could this be Christ the King
Whose every breath the angels bring?
Could this be the face of God, this child, the son I once carried?

In the dead of the night
As his life slips away
As he reads by the light
Of a star faraway

Holding on
Holding off
Holding out
Holding in

Could you be this old
And have your life just begin?

Reading by the light of a lost Christmas Day
It begins
Reading by the light of a lost Christmas Day

Tell me how many times can this story be told
After all of these years it should all sound so old
But it somehow rings true in the back of my mind
As I search for a dream that words can no longer define

Reading by the light of a lost Christmas Day
And the time
Reading by the light of a lost Christmas Day

And the time and the years
And the tears and the cost
And the hopes and the dreams
Of each child that is lost
And the whisper of wings
In the cold winter's air
As the snow it comes down
And visions appear everywhere

Reading by the light of a lost Christmas Day
In the air
Reading by the light of a lost Christmas Day

In the dead of the night
As his life slips away
As he reads by the light
Of a star faraway

Holding on
Holding off
Holding out
Holding in

Could you be this old
And have your life just begin

Reading by the light of a lost Christmas Day
It begins
Reading by the light of a lost Christmas Day
It begins
Reading by the light of a lost Christmas Day

It begins
Reading by the light of a lost Christmas Day
It begins

Looking at his son across the room
He feared to cross that divide
But how long could he stay in this dark
That allows us all to hide

Is there a wrong so great in life
That it undoes every good we've ever done
Is there an act so good it would undo all our wrongs
Every single one?

And in putting his whole
Life into this gesture
Would failing make it
Any lesser?

Then through the window he thought he saw
In the falling snow so near
The outline of his son's mother's face
But then it disappeared

It was only there for a second
And a second's not long, but yet
It was enough to cause that man
To take that very first step

And that step was followed by another
In that room still lit so dim
And before he realized how far he had gone
His son was directly in front of him

Then the father noticed on the windowsill
An old photo that he long ago had seen

It was a picture of him and his wife
When they were both about nineteen

It was leaning against a folder
That said "Property of the Deceased"
And underneath was his wife's name
And the date it had been released

It was obviously her personal possessions
That had been given to his son
Because since he had left them all behind
The child was the only one

His son must have always kept it with him
For the folder was weathered and torn
And he must have gazed at that picture countless times
For it was also all tattered and worn

Then his son noticed him standing there
And from his task looked up
And then looked at the picture beside him
And that one look, was enough

He recognized it was his father
That was now standing there
And gave him a smile of pure love and forgiveness
And of the past, he did not care

He did not care where he had been
The whys, the wheres, the hows
He only cared that his father was there
Standing by him now

Then the father turned and walked across the room
Which by now had lost its distance

And went to the nearest incubator
And picked up a trembling infant

And with the child within his arms
He returned to his son
And all the pain within his soul
At that moment was undone

And he sat in the rocking chair beside him
With the life he had retrieved
And side-by-side together
They rocked all through that Christmas Eve

O' COME ALL YE FAITHFUL
(Instrumental)

Now all that had occurred here this night
The angel had clearly seen
Not unlike an old fashioned movie
Upon a silvered screen
That borders on the edge of a
Forgotten childhood dream

And from all that he had witnessed
He thought his answer he had found
And once more unfolded his wings
And left earth's solid ground

With every sweep of those wings
Across time and space he soared
Until he found himself standing
Back in heaven, before his Lord

And he told his Lord the name of the father's son
But then he hesitated
Like a child in school unsure of his answer
But the Lord, He patiently waited

Then the angel added the names
Of the parishioners at the church
The musicians, the storyteller
The operator and the hospital nurse

Eventually there was hardly a person
That the angel had missed
And then at the very end he placed
The father's name, also on that list

That anyone could reflect his Lord's Son
Was now the angel's view
All it took was to follow the simple word's of His Son
"To do unto others, as you would have others do unto you"

Then the Lord smiled at His angel
And said, "You have done more than your task
It's a gift that eyes rarely have
That can see further than they are asked."

And so this night is ending
So close to where it did start
As the angel slept deep that night
Within his Lord's own heart

For hope never dies
At worst it only sleeps
And all we surrender
Christmas safely keeps

Through the cold winter nights
Of the longest Decembers
Till here by starlight
We begin to remember

That in the very end

The message Christmas is sending
Is that it is never too late
To change any life's ending

THE END

AFTER THE END OR
(THE NEXT DAY)

So Christmas Eve had come and past
But not so Christmas Day
And thus it is, we add a final act
Onto our yearly play

A taxicab pulled up to the Grand Hotel,
That morning somewhere around eight
And the father with his son got out
And asked the driver, to please wait

Then the father asked the clerk if he could speak
To the couple in room twelve twenty-four
Adding he did not know the couple's name
But had met their child the night before

The clerk answered most politely
That he would like to fulfill his wish
But the room number twelve twenty-four
In this hotel, did not exist

The father then described the little girl
Her age and dress as well
But the clerk said there had been no children there at all that week
Was he sure he had the right hotel?

So the father started wondering
If in the cold winter's air
He had somehow imagined the entire event
But then he realized, he didn't care

The only thing that mattered
When all was said and done
Was that he was reunited
With his one and only son

And when they got back into their cab
He heard a ripping sound
As the contents of his wife's folder
Spilled out onto the ground

As he rushed to pick it all up
He grabbed the picture first
Of him and his wife at the age nineteen
Long before she had given birth

And on the back he saw a poem he had written to her
Years before they had wed
When they were young, their lives just begun
And here is what it said,

"If a single tear fell from your eyes into the ocean
And then washed up on some far and distant shore
I would still recognize that teardrop
For in the end that tear would still be yours"

And then he saw another picture
That he had never seen before
Of a little girl in a Russian styled coat
Standing with her parents, in front of their store

The little girl he saw there
He now knew was a childhood picture of his wife
But it was also a picture of the little girl

He had just met on the previous night

And he realized that those who love
Death cannot divide
It only provides an extra soul
To watch over us from the other side

And together they returned
Back to the father's home
And shared the best Christmas
That either of them had ever known

And somewhere across eternity
Which in distance cannot be measured
The mother looked down upon them both
And their happiness she treasured

And later on late that night
When her son was drifting off to sleep
A tear once more rolled from her eyes
And trailed across her cheek

But this one was a tear of joy
That she could not keep inside
And this time she followed it through eternity
Across the great divide

Till it landed by another joyful tear
That her husband had just wept
And there unseen she joined him
In the silent vigil that he kept

For we are all born mortal
Like stars and candlelight
And all that really matters
Is what we do before we fall asleep each night

CHRISTMAS CANON ROCK

This night
We pray
Our lives will show

This dream he had
Each child
Still knows

We are waiting
We have not forgotten

On this night
On this night
On this night
On this very Christmas Night

Like the Sphinx knows silence
And the Pyramids know time
Like Sisyphus knew regret
As he thought about his crime

As Julius knew betrayal
As Judas knew the kiss
And David with his nervous hand
Knew when not to miss

And Helen in her blindness
Knew better how to touch
And Lincoln in his wisdom
Knew the angels in each of us

Like the Delphi knew tomorrow
Like crocodiles know the Nile
Like Michelangelo knew stone
A mother knows her baby's smile

Then she placed her hands upon his lips
In something akin to a kiss
And in her arms he stayed asleep
As the night grew dark and the child dreamt deep

DIFFERENT WINGS

Dream, child
As childhood wants to do

Dream all this night will allow
Dream, child
Dream with an angel's view
Out there safe in your clouds

Wait for me now
I will be there for you
No matter what
Tomorrow may bring
This I will vow
I will be there
For this child with different

Dream, child
Stars have been rumored to
See dreams within newborn eyes
And in their arms I believe they do
Keep safe until you arise

Wait for me now
I will be there for you
No matter what
Tomorrow may bring
This I will vow
I will be there
For this child with different wings

And so it's here our story ends
Exactly where it did start
In that labyrinth of mystery
We call the human heart

For they say that without it
No one can truly live
And it also has been rumored
That without it, we cannot forgive

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

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JON OLIVA - PIANO AND KEYBOARDS
AL PITRELLI - LEAD, RHYTHM GUITAR AND KEYBOARDS
PAUL O'NEILL - RHYTHM GUITARS
CHRIS CAFFERY - GUITARS
TRISTAN AVAKIAN - GUITARS
ANGUS CLARK - GUITARS
ALEX SKOLNICK - GUITARS
JOHNNY LEE MIDDLETON - BASS
DAVID Z - BASS
JEFF ALLEGUE - BASS
JANE MANGINI - PIANO
CARMINE GIGLIO - KEYBOARDS
MEE EUN KIM - KEYBOARDS
JEFF PLATE - DRUMS
JOHN O.REILLY - DRUMS
TAKANORI NIIDA - DRUMS
JOHN CLARK - ALL HORNS
AMY HELM - WHISTLE SOLO
DAVE WITTMAN - DRUM, GUITAR AND BASS INSERTS
AND FOR ALL THOSE LITTLE THINGS THE BAND FORGOT

LEAD VOCALS:
JENNIFER CELLA (CHRISTMAS CANON ROCK, DIFFERENT WINGS)
WENDY EGGERS (QUEEN OF THE WINTER NIGHT)
ROBERT EVAN (WHAT IS CHRISTMAS?, BACK TO A REASON, WHAT CHILD IS THIS?)
GARY GILES (CHRISTMAS JAM)
MICHAEL LANNING (CHRISTMAS DREAMS)
JAMES ROBERT LEWIS (CHRISTMAS NIGHTS IN BLUE)
J. MARK MCVEY (THE LOST CHRISTMAS EVE)
DARYL PEDIFORD (FOR THE SAKE OF OUR BROTHER)

SOLO CHILD VOCALS (THE LOST CHRISTMAS EVE):
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STORY AND LYRICS BY PAUL O'NEILL

MUSIC BY:
FAITH NOEL (READING, O'NEILL, KINKEL)
THE LOST CHRISTMAS EVE (O'NEILL, PITRELLI)
CHRISTMAS DREAMS (O'NEILL, KINKEL)
WIZARDS IN WINTER (O'NEILL, KINKEL)
REMEMBER (O'NEILL, KINKEL)
ANNO DOMINE (O'NEILL)
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CHRISTMAS NIGHTS IN BLUE (O'NEILL, PITRELLI)
CHRISTMAS JAM (O'NEILL)
SIBERIAN SLEIGH RIDE (O'NEILL)
WHAT IS CHRISTMAS? (O'NEILL, OLIVA)
FOR THE SAKE OF OUR BROTHER (O'NEILL, READING, OAKELEY)
THE WISDOM OF SNOW (O'NEILL, KINKEL, OLIVA)
WISH LISZT (LISZT, O'NEILL,)
BACK TO A REASON (O'NEILL, OLIVA)
CHRISTMAS BELLS, CAROUSELS & TIME (O'NEILL, OLIVA)
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CHRISTMAS CANON ROCK (O'NEILL)
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